

LSC AND VIRGO POLICY ON RELEASING GRAVITATIONAL WAVE TRIGGERS TO THE PUBLIC IN THE ADVANCED DETECTORS ERA

The LSC and Virgo recognize the great potential benefits of multi-messenger observations, including rapid electromagnetic follow-up observations of GW triggers. Both Collaborations (the LSC and Virgo) will partner with astronomers to carry out an inclusive observing campaign for potentially interesting GW triggers, with MoUs to ensure coordination and confidentiality of the information. They are open to all requests from interested astronomers or astronomy projects which want to become partners through signing an MoU. They encourage colleagues to help set up and organize this effort in an efficient way to guarantee the best science can be done with gravitational wave triggers.

After the published discovery of gravitational waves with data from LSC and/or Virgo detectors, both the LSC and Virgo will begin releasing especially significant triggers promptly to the entire scientific community to enable a wider range of follow-up observations. This will take effect after the Collaborations have published papers (or a paper) about 4 GW events, at which time a detection rate can be reasonably estimated. The releases will be done as promptly as possible, within an hour of the detected transient if feasible. Initially, the released triggers will be those which have an estimated false alarm rate smaller than 1 per 100 years.

Partners who have signed an MoU with the LSC and Virgo will have access to GW triggers with a lower significance threshold and/or lower latency, according to the terms of the MoU, in order to carry out a more systematic joint observing campaign and combined interpretation of the results.

Throughout the Advanced Detectors era, the LSC and Virgo will release appropriate segments of data from operating detectors corresponding to detected gravitational waves presented in LSC/Virgo authored publications, at the time of the publication, including the first claimed detection of gravitational waves.

The agreement has been reached by the two collaborations as detailed in this document, and will be submitted to the Virgo funding agencies in the coming months.

The text of this policy was approved by LSC Council on March 21, 2012.

The LIGO Data Management Policy LIGO-M1000066 will take precedence in how LIGO data are released should this policy and the LIGO DMP be in potential conflict.